23. Amendment of the Rubber Theft Prevention Regulation IX of 1087.

CAPTAIN M. F. SHORE (*Member, South Travancore Planters' Association*) stated that the provisions of the Rubber Theft Prevention Regulation IX of 1087, as they stood at present, were insufficient to effectively prevent the increasing rubber thefts in the State. He therefore suggested the following amendments to the Regulation :—

(i) The following clause might be added to Section (4), sub-section (1):— "That licenses may be granted only on deposit of Rs. 1,000 and that the names of such license holders may, from time to time, be published in the Government Gazette". Section 4 would then read as: "The Peishkar or other officer in charge of the Revenue Division may issue free of charge, licenses under his hand authorising the person to whom the same are granted to deal in rubber, that licenses may be granted only on deposit of Rs. 1,000 and that the names of such license holders may from time to time be published in the Government Gazette."

(ii) The clause "In perpetuity and his deposit of Rs. 1,000 forfeited" might be added to section 5 clause (3), which would read as "any person who is found guilty of any offence under this Regulation shall be liable to have his license cancelled in perpetuity and his deposit of Rs. 1,000 forfeited."

(iii) The clause "Cr one member of the local Planters' Association nominated annually by Government to inspect in conjunction with either of the above" to be added to Section 10, which would read as:—"It shall be lawful for any magistrate or for any police officer not below the rank of an Inspector or for any person authorised in writing by the Peishkar or other officer in charge of the Revenue Division or one member of the local Planters' Association nominated annually by Government to inspect, in conjunction with either of the above, licensed premises, to enter any licensed premises at any time between sun rise and sun set and to call for, inspect and take extracts from any book required to be kept by this Regulation etc, etc."

For the rest the member was of opinion that it would meet the purpose if the other provisions of the Regulation were properly enforced.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Captain Shore, this question came up at the 22nd session of the Assembly. Government are aware that rubber thefts and illicit dealing in stolen rubber are becoming a growing evil in Travancore. Some time back we had the Rubber Theft Prevention Regulation promulgated; but, almost immediately after, there was a slump in the price of rubber and the thieves themselves did not consider it worth their while to steal rubber. Therefore the Regulation was practically not enforced. Since then the price of rubber has gone up. It has been increasing steadily, and from information before me I gather that rubber stealing and dealing in stolen rubber has become an organised business in Travancore and is in the hands of unscrupulous people. I am in consultation with the Commissioner of Police as to what steps should be taken to break this ring, and I have not the slightest doubt that sooner or later we shall get to the bottom of this matter.

In regard to the amendments you propose, they are somewhat comprehensive if not exactly drastic. Nevertheless I shall have them carefully examined by my law officers, by the Commissioner of Police and Magistrates and I shall come to a conclusion upon it. I quite agree with you that the case may possibly be met in other directions if the Regulation is strictly enforced. We have now under consideration the question of appointing an Honorary Magistrate, in the rubber-growing districts, who will be able to take active part in the suppression of this evil, and the question of associating, with the executive officers of Government, members of one or more Planters' Associations will also be considered forthwith.

24. Defects of the Insolvency Regulation.

MR. RAMASUBBU CHETTIYAR BHAGAVATHIPERUMAL CHETTIYAR (*Member, Trading Classes, Kottar*) dealing with the defects of the Insolvency Regulation pointed out the following defects in the Regulation :

(*a*) There was no provision in the Regulation to prevent debtors putting in fraudulent insolvency petitions. This could be rectified by requiring all insolvency

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